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Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 3 July 2015

29/22. Protection of the family: contribution of the family to the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living for its members, particularly through its role in poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other relevant human rights instruments, including the Declaration on the Right to Development,

Recalling Human Rights Council resolution 26/11 of 26 June 2014 entitled "Protection of the family",

Recalling also General Assembly resolutions 44/82 of 8 December 1989, 47/237 of 20 September 1993, 50/142 of 21 December 1995, 52/81 of 12 December 1997, 54/124 of 17 December 1999, 56/113 of 19 December 2001, 57/164 of 18 December 2002, 58/15 of 3 December 2003, 59/111 of 6 December 2004, 59/147 of 20 December 2004, 60/133 of 16 December 2005, 62/129 of 18 December 2007, 64/133 of 18 December 2009, 66/126 of 19 December 2011, 67/142 of 20 December 2012, 68/136 of 18 December 2013 and 69/144 of 18 December 2014, concerning the proclamation of, preparations for, and observance and commemoration of the International Year of the Family and its tenth and twentieth anniversaries,

Recognizing that the preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family provide a unique opportunity to draw further attention to the objectives of the International Year for increasing cooperation at all levels on family issues and for undertaking concerted actions to strengthen family-centred policies and programmes as part of an integrated comprehensive approach to the advancement of human rights and development,

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Reaffirming that States have the primary responsibility to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all human beings,

Recognizing that the family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children, and that children, for the full and harmonious development of their personality, should grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,

Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,

Reaffirming that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State,

Noting with concern that the contribution of the family in society and in the achievement of development goals continues to be largely overlooked and underemphasized, and recognizing the potential of the family to contribute to national development and to the achievement of major objectives of every society and of the United Nations, including the eradication of poverty and the creation of just, stable and secure societies,

Conscious that the majority of the internationally agreed development goals, especially those relating to the reduction of poverty, education of children and the reduction of maternal mortality, would be difficult to attain unless the strategies to achieve them focus on the family, which can contribute positively to, inter alia, eradicating poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases,

1. *Welcomes* the holding of the panel discussion on the protection of the family and its members by the Human Rights Council on 15 September 2014, during its twenty-seventh session, and takes note of the summary of the panel discussion contained in the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;[1]

2. *Also welcomes* the holding of a plenary meeting during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, in December 2014, on the observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, in order to discuss the role of family-oriented policies in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda, and acknowledges all other international and regional initiatives in the context of celebrating that anniversary;

3. *Acknowledges* the efforts made by Governments, the United Nations system and civil society to fulfil the objectives guiding the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the International Year at the national, regional and international levels, and urges States to continue to make every possible effort to realize the objectives of the International Year and its follow-up processes, and to develop strategies and programmes aimed at strengthening national capacities to address national priorities relating to family issues;

4. *Reaffirms* that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State;

[1] A/HRC/28/40.

5. *Also reaffirms* that States have the primary responsibility to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all human beings, and stresses the fundamental importance of full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of all family members;

6. *Recognizes* that the family, while respect for the rights of its members is ensured, is a strong force for social cohesion and integration, intergenerational solidarity and social development, and that the family plays a crucial role in the preservation of cultural identity, traditions, morals, heritage and the values system of society;

7. *Conscious* that families are sensitive to strain caused by social and economic changes, and expresses deep concern that conditions have worsened for many families owing to economic and financial crises, lack of job security, temporary employment and lack of regular income and gainful employment, as well as measures taken by Governments seeking to balance their budget by reducing social expenditure;

8. *Recognizes* that the family unit is facing increasing vulnerabilities;

9. *Urges* Member States to create a conducive environment to strengthen and support all families, recognizing that equality between women and men and respect for all the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all family members are essential to family well-being and to society at large, noting the importance of reconciliation of work and family life and recognizing the principle of shared parental responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child;

10. *Reaffirms* the need to promote and protect the rights of the child, and in this regard calls upon States to render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities in the best interests of the child, bearing in mind that a child should grow up in a safe and supportive family environment, and giving high priority to the rights of the children, including to survival, protection and development;

11. *Stresses* that equality between women and men, women's equal participation in employment and shared parental responsibility are essential elements of a policy on the family;

12. *Regrets* that women's social and economic contributions to the welfare of the family and the social significance of maternity and paternity continue to be inadequately addressed and that women continue on many occasions to bear a disproportionate share of household responsibilities and the care of children, the sick and elderly, and in this regard emphasizes the need to consistently address such imbalances and to ensure that maternity, motherhood, parenting and the role of women in procreation is not a basis for discrimination nor for restricting the full participation of women in society;

13. *Notes* that single-headed households, child-headed households and intergenerational households are particularly vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion;

14. *Resolves* to pay particular attention to family units headed by women and children, while bearing in mind that a considerable proportion of households worldwide are headed by women and many other households are dependent on female income, and that female-maintained households are very often among the poorest because of wage discrimination, occupational segregation patterns in the labour market and other gender-based barriers;

15. *Emphasizes* that States should ensure that children with disabilities have equal rights with respect to family life with a view to realizing these rights, and prevent concealment, abandonment, neglect and segregation of children with disabilities, and that

States should take measures to provide early and comprehensive information, services and support to children with disabilities and their families;

16. *Stresses* that persons with disabilities and their family members should receive the necessary protection and assistance to enable families to contribute to the full and equal enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities, and that States should, where the immediate family is unable to care for a child with disabilities, make every effort to provide alternative care within the wider family, and failing that, within the community in a family setting;

17. *Recognizes* the positive impact that policies and measures to protect the family can have on protecting and promoting the human rights of its members and can contribute to, inter alia, decreasing drop-out rates from educational institutions, achieving equality between women and men and girls and boys, empowering women and girls and enhancing the protection against violence, abuses, sexual exploitation, harmful practices and the worst forms of child labour, while bearing in mind that violations and abuses of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of family members adversely affect families and have a negative impact on efforts aimed at protecting the family;

18. *Underlines* the importance of strengthening intergenerational partnerships and solidarity among generations, and calls upon States in this regard to promote opportunities for voluntary, constructive and regular interaction between young people and older generations in the family, in the workplace and in society at large;

19. *Recognizes* that stable, supportive and nurturing family relationships, supported by communities and, where available, professional services, can provide a vital shield against substance abuse, particularly among minors;

20. *Urges* States, in accordance with their respective obligations under international human rights law, to provide the family, as the natural and fundamental group unit of society, with effective protection and assistance, and encourages States in this regard to take, as appropriate and to the maximum of their available resources, measures including:

(*a*) Creating family-friendly policies to support the family, and assessing such policies and programmes for their impact on family well-being;

(*b*) Designing, implementing and promoting family-sensitive policies in the field of housing, work, health, social security and education in order to create an environment supportive of the family, including affordable, accessible and quality care services for children and other dependants, parental and other leave schemes, campaigns to sensitize public opinion and other relevant actors on equal sharing of employment and family responsibilities between women and men;

(*c*) Analysing policies and programmes, including those relating to macroeconomic stability, structural adjustment programmes, taxation, investments, employment, markets and all relevant sectors of the economy with respect to their impact on family well-being and conditions;

(*d*) Supporting research and developing comprehensive strategies to enhance the ability of families and communities to care for older family members and to reinforce the role of grandparents in raising grandchildren;

(*e*) Addressing the causes and mitigating the consequences of family disintegration;

(*f*) Facilitating, as appropriate, the integration of families into society and their reunification, preservation and protection, including by providing adequate shelter, access to basic services and a sustainable livelihood;

(g) Working towards reducing poverty by, inter alia, granting assistance to families in difficult life situations and increasing the earning power of all adult members of economically deprived families;

(*h*) Providing and promoting the means to facilitate compatibility between labour force participation and parental responsibilities, especially for single-parent households with young children, and paying special attention to the needs of widows and orphans through means including health insurance and social security, cash and in-kind transfer programmes, day-care centres and facilities for breastfeeding mothers within the work premises, kindergartens, part-time jobs, paid parental leave, paid maternity leave, flexible work schedules and reproductive and child health-care services;

(*i*) Strengthening or, if necessary, establishing relevant national agencies or governmental bodies responsible for the implementation and monitoring of family policies;

21. *Calls upon* States and encourages non-governmental organizations and community organizations concerned to develop innovative ways to provide more effective assistance to families and the individuals within them who may be affected by specific problems, such as extreme poverty, chronic unemployment, illness, domestic and sexual violence, dowry payments, drug or alcohol dependence, incest, child abuse, neglect or abandonment;

22. *Recognizes* the important role of civil society, including research institutes and academia, in advocacy, promotion, research and policymaking and, as appropriate, evaluation of family policy development and capacity-building;

23. *Also recognizes* that the family plays a key role in social development, and as such should be strengthened and attention paid to the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of its members, and invites States, the organizations of the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders to take into account the role of the family as a contributor to sustainable development, and the need to strengthen family policy development in their ongoing efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals;

24. *Encourages* States to give due consideration to the role and status of the family in the context of the ongoing negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, and invites States to consider mainstreaming the promotion of family-oriented policies as a cross-cutting issue in the proposed goals and targets of the post-2015 agenda;

25. *Invites* States to consider mainstreaming the promotion of family-oriented policies as a cross-cutting issue in national development plans and programmes;

26. *Highlights* the need for continued inter-agency and regional cooperation on family issues in order to generate greater awareness of this subject among the governing bodies of the United Nations system;

27. *Encourages* States to support the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities;

28. *Invites* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the treaty bodies, relevant special procedure mandate holders and other relevant international and regional human rights mechanisms, within their respective mandates and competence, to pay due attention in their work to the implementation by States of their obligations under relevant provisions of international human rights law to provide protection and support to the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society;

29. *Requests* the High Commissioner to prepare a report on the impact of the implementation by States of their obligations under relevant provisions of international human rights law with regard to the protection of the family, and on the contribution of families in realizing the right to an adequate standard of living for their members,

particularly through their role in poverty eradication and in achieving sustainable development, while giving due consideration to the status of the family in the developments related to the ongoing work on the future sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda, and to present it to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-first session;

30. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

45th meeting
3 July 2015

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 29 to 14, with 4 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Algeria, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Maldives, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam

Against:

Albania, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Korea, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia]